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LIEUT. RICHARD EVELYN BYRD, JR., UNITED STATES
NAVY

JANUARY 26, 1925.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. SWANSON, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 9461]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 9461) for the relief of Lieut. Richard Evelyn Byrd, jr., United States Navy, having had the same under consideration, report favorably thereon with the recommendation that the bill do pass without amendment.

The committee considers that Lieutenant Byrd deserves this promotion due to the fact that in spite of his retirement his active duty has been practically continuous, and the past few years he has remained on active duty against his own personal wishes because he was requested to do so by the Navy Department. Also, the department has reported that Lieutenant Byrd has rendered service of the highest character which has been of exceptional value to the Navy, and that he was a lieutenant commander during the war, in which rank he rendered distinguished service until January 1, 1922, when temporary ranks were revoked.

Twenty-two very detailed reports of fitness made over a period of years since his retirement by high officials of the Navy are almost unanimous in giving him the highest mark that can be made of "superior or above the great majority of officers" in all attributes on which an officer is reported, such as conduct, courtesy, devotion to duty, education, force, industry, leadership, initiative, judgment, justice, patience, physical energy and endurance, reliability, self-control, subordination, and discipline and loyalty of subordinate.

Lieutenant Byrd's record shows 17 citations for service performed over and above the call to duty. Four of these are for bravery, two of which are for extraordinary heroism in saving lives.

His last seven years of service has been in aviation, as an aviator. This officer's record shows his service to have been invaluable to

aviation and the naval service generally, and the passage of this act is, therefore, recommended.

The following are extracts from the record of Lieut. Richard Evelyn Byrd, jr., United States Navy:

1. Twenty-two detailed reports of fitness on Lieutenant Byrd by different officers in the Navy show him to be above the great majority (the highest mark that can be given) in the following: Aptitude for the service, conduct, cooperative qualities, courtesy, devotion to duty, education, force, industry, initiative, judgment, justice, leadership, military manner and bearing, neatness of person and dress, patience, physical energy and endurance, reliability, self-control, subordination, discipline of subordinates, loyalty of subordinates, efficiency of personnel (based upon the efforts and results of such efforts of the officer concerned), efficiency of material (based upon the results which the officer concerned has accomplished in keeping up or improving the material under his charge).

2. There follow some quotations from the special remark column of these reports of fitness.

Director of naval aviation, January 1 to March 31, 1919:

"This officer has been engaged in the preparation of navigational material for the proposed trans-Atlantic flight and has been primarily responsible for the development of much of the special navigational equipment which it is proposed to use on the flight."

Commanding officer NC seaplane division, May 3 to July 8, 1919:

"To this officer was assigned the duty of developing navigational methods for trans-Atlantic flight, testing these methods, and providing navigational equipment for the seaplanes. This work was done in a most excellent manner, and many things of great value to the service were developed by him. He proceeded as far as Newfoundland in NC-3, and I greatly regretted that the department would not permit me to have him as one of my personnel for the whole flight. Has boundless energy and enthusiasm and is an excellent all-round officer."

Director of naval aviation, March 7 to March 31, 1921:

"A retired officer on active duty serving as assistant for information and statistics. Although retired, his duties have been most active and of great value to aviation and to the service. He has a great deal of tact, a fine appearance and bearing, and has performed confidential duty of great value. He has much originality and initiative. I consider him to be an exceptionally efficient and valuable officer."

Chief of Bureau of Aeronautics, April 1 to September 30, 1921:

"Lieutenant Commander Byrd is an exceptionally loyal, capable, and efficient officer. For his age and length of service he has remarkably good judgment, tact, and an ability to cooperate with others. He is zealous and indefatigable in the performance of his duty, persistent in accomplishing the end in view, and does so without creating friction or opposition. I have no hesitation in saying that he, more than anyone else, by his own qualifications had much to do with getting passed the legislation creating the Bureau of Aeronautics in the Navy Department. It was by his knowledge of aviation, its relation to the Navy, and by his tact and persistence in persuading those opposed to it, and also in making new converts, that the law was passed. His work in this connection was invaluable to the director of aviation and later to the chief of bureau, and to the service. He has a pleasing and strong personality and brings credit to the service in his contact with civilians."

"On account of his original and valuable work in devising instruments and methods for air navigation in connection with the trans-Atlantic flight, he was detailed to go to England to return on the ZR-2 to assist in navigation. He was there during the loss of ZR-2, and rendered prompt and valuable assistance at this critical time, and received letters of thanks and commendation from the British authorities which, it is assumed, have been made a part of this record."

"Unfortunately, Lieutenant Commander Byrd is on the retired list, and his being placed on inactive duty will be a great loss to the bureau and to the service itself. I consider Lieutenant Commander Byrd one of the most valuable officers I have met in the service, and that his being placed on inactive duty will be not only a loss to this bureau but to the service itself."

Chief of Bureau of Navigation, September 30, 1921, to March 31, 1922:

"Lieutenant Byrd has shown great adaptability in handling matters dealing with Congress. He has great tact, force, and ability for cooperating efforts of others, and has been of great value to the bureau and to the department. He is an officer of ability and high professional attainments, always ready and willing

to help forward the interests and welfare of the service. His duties have been performed thoroughly and to my entire satisfaction."

Chief of Bureau of Navigation, March 31, 1922, to July 12, 1922:

"Lieutenant Byrd (retired) was actively employed under this bureau during the period covered and the performance of his duties were most successfully carried out. He shows tact, knowledge, and ability of a very high order, and his services were of great value not only to the bureau but to the whole Navy. He is always courteous, willing, and earnest, and whatever work assigned him was not only cheerfully but thoroughly well carried out. The bureau regrets to lose his services."

Commandant first naval district, June 14 to September 30, 1923:

"Lieutenant Byrd has performed his duties in a most satisfactory manner. He is one of the most efficient officers that I have been associated with. He is an officer of great judgment, rare ability, rare initiative, and very conscientious. It is a great pleasure to have him associated with me."

Commandant ninth naval district, November 20, 1923, to February 12, 1924:

"An excellent aviation officer; active, industrious, loyal, and an excellent officer in every respect."

3. Lieutenant Byrd was recommended for a distinguished service medal for his war service. He was awarded a silver star.

4. Byrd received the following special letters of commendation, which are given for duty performed which calls for some special recognition. He has an unusually large number of such commendations:

(a) For heroism in saving a man from drowning, August 15, 1914, for which he received a congressional life-saving medal of honor.

(b) Commendation for helping to save a man from drowning, July 16, 1914.

(c) Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for courage, energy, and efficiency on the first trans-Atlantic flight.

(d) For extraordinary heroism in rescuing Captain Hills.

(e) Decorated as commander in the Military Order of Avis by the Government of Portugal for inventions of air navigational instruments, September 13, 1921.

(f) Commendation for efficiency as commanding officer of the United States naval air forces in Canada and as commanding officer of the naval air station, Halifax, June 11, 1919.

(g) Commendation from Admiral W. L. Grant, Royal Navy, British commander in chief North American and West Indies squadrons, for assisting in creating good relations between the Royal Air Force officers and the United States naval air forces, December 20, 1918.

(h) Commendation from Governor of Rhode Island for efficiency in building up the naval militia of the State of Rhode Island, June 28, 1917, which was concurred in by Bureau of Navigation, July 9, 1917.

(i) Commendation from chairman of the commission on training camps for organizing as secretary the Navy Department commission on training camps, December, 30, 1917.

(j) Letter of thanks from the deputy minister of the naval service of Canada for services in the matter of building up the Canadian naval air service, November 4, 1918.

(k) Letter of thanks from Colonel Cull, Royal Air Force, director of Royal Canadian naval air service, August 27, 1918.

(l) Letter of thanks from Vice Admiral Storey, Royal Navy, November 8, 1918, for services in the matter of building up the Canadian naval air service.

(m) Commendation for compiling navigational data and for constructing necessary instruments for the NC boats for the trans-Atlantic flight.

(n) Commendation from Colonel Munson, General Staff of the Army, for efficiency in handling the legislative phases of the service pay bill for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Public Health, and Coast and Geodetic Survey, June 10, 1922.

(o) Same from Commander Porterfield, United States Navy, June 16, 1922.

(p) Commendation from Commander Stapler for judgment and assistance in legislative matters, July 27, 1922.

(q) Commendation from Secretary of the Air Ministry of Great Britain for zeal in connection with the aftermath of the wrecking of the airship ZR-2.

The following letter from the Acting Secretary of the Navy sets forth the attitude of the Navy Department:

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, May 28, 1924.

The CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE ON NAVAL AFFAIRS,
House of Representatives.

MY DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Replying further to the committee's letter of May 27, 1924, inclosing a bill (H. R. 9461) for the relief of Lieut. Richard Evelyn Byrd, jr., United States Navy, and requesting the views and recommendations of the Navy Department thereon, the department has the honor to inform you as follows:

Enactment of the bill, H. R. 9461, would operate to promote Lieut. Richard Evelyn Byrd, jr., United States Navy, retired, from the rank of lieutenant to the rank of lieutenant commander.

Lieutenant Byrd graduated from the Naval Academy in the class of 1912, and was retired for physical disability incurred in line of duty on March 16, 1916. He was placed on inactive duty at that time and remained in such status for a period of two and one-half months, when, at the request of the Navy Department, he consented to return to active duty and has been on active duty continuously from that time until the present date. He was temporarily promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander on the retired list on September 1, 1918. He rendered distinguished service in this rank until the general revocation of temporary appointments on December 31, 1921. His duties during the World War were in connection with aviation.

Lieutenant Byrd's record as an officer is of the highest character, and his services have been very valuable to the Navy Department.

The department considers that Lieutenant Byrd has rendered exceptional service to the Navy, and that his case is a deserving one. However, in view of the fact that this legislation is for the benefit of an individual and not for the general good of the naval service, the department can not consistently recommend its passage.

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
Acting Secretary of the Navy.

Personally I feel that there is no officer who better deserves this recognition.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

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